

[Transcript] True Sunlight / MMP #82: Week Six of the Alex Murdaugh Trial: 'What A Tangled Web We Weave'

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I don't know what the jury will decide when they deliberate this week, but after five weeks of testimony and hundreds of pieces of evidence, I hope that they can see the truth through Ellick Murdoch's tangled web of lies.

My name is Mandy Matney.

I have been covering the Murdoch family for more than four years now.

This is another special episode of the Murdoch Murders podcast, Light from Walterboro, as the Murdoch Murders trial is underway.

MMP is produced by my husband, David Moses, and written by my best friend, Liz Ferrell.

So a quick note for MMP's Soak of the Sun members.

We have something really fun for y'all this week.

Tomorrow night, Thursday, March 2nd, at 6pm Eastern time, join my friend Justin Bamberg and I for a YouTube happy hour.

Justin has watched the jury as the attorney of several of Ellick Murdoch's financial victims and as tired as I am of talking about the Murdoch trial.

I am so excited to chat with Justin tomorrow night.

He's one of the very bright lights in this dark story.

To join, go to mmp.supercast.com and we will send a special link to Soak of the Sun members tomorrow morning.

So when Ellick Murdoch got on the stand last week, he showed the world exactly who he is. After spending so much time investigating this family, especially him, it was personally very gratifying to have so many people see this at the same time.

Because who Ellick Murdoch is, is undeniable in our opinion.

He is a liar.

He is very likely a narcissist and possibly even a psychopath.

He cares about one thing and that is himself and we believe that the evidence so far has shown that he is a murderer.

Obviously the last part is for the jury to decide.

It has been frustrating at times hearing the counterpoint to this because the counterpoint seems to be based on two things.

Ellick doesn't quite look like someone who would murder his wife and son and the crying.

Even Washington Post columnist Kathleen Parker, who again lives in South Carolina and runs in the same circles as the Dicks and Gems of Columbia, seemed convinced by Ellick's crying.

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And you know what?

We will concede that at times the tears may have been real.

But what are the tears for?

Is he crying for himself?

Is it regret for what he allegedly did to Maggie and Paul?

Is it actual grief over what he lost?

Which by the way is something that can co-exist with the crime.

Ellick can feel grief over losing Maggie and Paul and also be the person who killed them.

Another thing that has been frustrating is hearing this sentence.

I think he did it but if I were on the jury I'd have to vote not guilty.

Help us out with that one because it makes no sense.

If you think that he's guilty but you would vote not guilty.

In Creighton Waters closing arguments he explained the guilty beyond a reasonable doubt leaves you firmly convinced of the guilt of the defendant and is not proof that overcomes any possible doubt.

I saw a tweet that summed it up for me.

It was a woman named Lydia Wardell and here's what it said.

Three people went down to those kennels.

Only one person left and the one who left lied about having been there.

It is not that damn complicated.

The tweet said, it is not that complicated.

Every day we get asked about how we think the jury is going to rule.

Obviously, we don't have an answer to that and no one does.

We are preparing for a hung jury because A, no matter what the evidence shows, we're still talking about home court advantage.

This is a Colleton County jury and this is Murdoch territory and B, because of what I just said, there is a disturbing percentage of people who don't believe he did it because they can't picture him killing the son that he said that he loved and a lot of talking heads on TV are pushing those beliefs in favor of the defense.

There is so much that has come out during this trial and there's also so much that's being held back.

Not too many people are afraid to take a side outside of the courtroom in case he is found not guilty.

Why?

Because they have to live here and work here and still operate alongside the Murdochs.

The Murdochs, as you can now see, are not ones to duck their heads in shame and fade into the background.

This is why we never believed for one second that the community turned its backs on the Murdochs because of the bow crash or that Elik in any way, shape or form, was ever worried about sled.

That said, however this ends up, we believe the timeline is clear and it is not that damn complicated.

Watching Elik testify was hard.

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Not only did it confirm our suspicions from the jailhouse phone calls that his entire family has been held hostage by his personality, it showed just how much of an emotionally abusive relationship Maggie was in.

Even close to Maggie once told us, she had a lot of responsibility in the family, but no authority.

Elik was the breadwinner, Elik handled the finances, Elik decided what the boys needed and who they would be.

Elik emphasized the importance of that last name.

Maggie belonged to Elik, Paul belonged to Elik and Buster belonged to Elik.

They were there for him and Buster continues to be there for him.

We have emphasized over and over again that this is not just a murder case, it is a corruption case and it is, but we don't want to lose sight of how this is also a domestic violence case.

We'll get some insights from the testimony, but the biggest thing here is to understand in this moment, something that we've said over and over.

The Murdochs are known for getting away with bad behavior.

This week, during the course of the trial, Elik was quietly charged with a misdemeanor for contraband, the posting courier first reported last week.

According to our sources, the charges stemmed from an incident in the courtroom where Elik's sister Lynn passed him a John Grisham novel.

The family had to move back in court because they wouldn't follow the rules.

Sound familiar?

The Murdochs are also known for manipulating outcomes and they have been groomed since birth to believe that reality will become whatever it is they've decided is true.

If you don't believe us, rewatch John Marvin Murdoch's testimony.

The grief was real.

Everything else was carefully choreographed to appeal to the jury.

The humility, the mention of that \$15 beer as if he's just your average working class guy, the insistence that he and Elik don't care about their family's last name and legacy any more than the rest of us care about ours.

The folksy humor, the ridiculous and gross story about Elik pooping his pants in the car.

All of this was to create an air of credibility so that the jury thinks John Marvin wants to catch the killer so bad and John Marvin doesn't think the killer has been caught.

And Elik is a grieving man with such a horrible addiction.

And let's not forget the repeated mention of Yemisee police chief Greg Alexander's name.

Don't lose sight of that.

Yes, Greg played a role in escorting John Marvin Murdoch to Moselle and rescuing him when the truck allegedly broke down.

I say allegedly because how long did the Murdoch's let law enforcement believe that Paul's truck was taken from the scene and left on the side of the road?

What was that \$5,000 payment Elik made to Greg shortly after the murders?

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Greg says it was a loan to his father.

Are we to take that at face value?

Beyond Greg's role that night, whatever that role may be, why was John Marvin saying his name?

Why did Elik mention Greg and Colletian County Sheriff Buddy Hill's names?

Manipulation.

That's why.

They want the jury to hear those names and read into it.

Is the jury asking themselves, if I say guilty, am I going to be able to drive in Colletian County after this?

Am I going to be able to feel safe in Yemisee?

You might think we're being alarmist here, but this stuff is real.

And that's why we do what we do.

We want this to change.

We are so happy the state has had the courage to bring the case this far, but it isn't over.

We have been repeatedly told that this is the tip of the iceberg.

And frankly, that is scary.

But it's a battle for another day.

One more time.

It is not that complicated.

Lying about your alibi matters.

Lying about your alibi matters even more when it's to cover up the fact that you were at the scene of two murders right around the time of those two murders.

Today we want to talk about those lies and the manipulations that we've seen over the past week.

And we want to talk about the one thing Elik cannot explain away, no matter how many times he changes his story.

No matter how many times he tries to retrofit it into the evidence in front of him.

No matter how many times Elik says he can't trust sled.

The timeline.

Let's start with Elik's former co-worker, attorney Mark Ball.

Mark Ball was a witness for the defense.

But then, right before our eyes, he turned into the state's witness.

And on Tuesday afternoon, he came back and took the stand as one of the state's rebuttal witnesses.

Mark has known Elik for 34 years.

He lived about 10 minutes from Moselle.

He and his wife arrived on scene shortly after the first of the first responders.

His initial testimony seemed very intentionally crafted, like he was using past testimony and evidence to corroborate the defense's assertions about the crime scene and about the night of the murders.

He answered each question gently, like a storyteller on a bedtime app.

And his tone more than anything else seemed to bolster his credibility.

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He told the court how he was surprised that sled allowed them, Elik's friends and law partners in the house, and how they didn't seem to protect Paul's body from water that was dripping from the roof of the kennels.

Again, we think there are a lot of questions that need to be answered about the management of the crime scene, but we also cannot stress this enough.

The management of the crime scene only benefited Elik Murdoch.

Elik, of all people, would know that, and that's not just because he was a prosecutor.

He knew the questions over jurisdiction and the anomalies that occurred the night of the boat crash and afterward were helpful to the criminal and civil cases.

And on the day of the roadside shooting, Elik left the scene of the crime and basically hitchhiked himself to another location miles away, leaving that scene unattended and therefore open to scrutiny.

That said, Mark Ball's testimony about the crime scene was damaging to the state.

Or rather, it would have been damaging had this turned out to be a crime scene case.

And it would have been had the state not drawn Mark Ball away from the defense.

Here is the moment when it was clear Mark was not there to help Elik Murdoch.

I have said that, but I don't know, Mr. Walters, how I would respond if I'd lost him and I've told you the same thing.

I don't know how you're supposed to react when you lose your wife and your child in such a brutal manner, but no, to answer your question, I didn't see him on the phone like I was trying to call clients and did you hear anything?

Did you see anything?

Those kinds of things.

So I mean, the answer is no, I didn't see him doing that.

I wasn't around him all the time, but no, I did not.

Also here.

He had a badge.

Did you ever see a badge that he had?

I did.

Where did he keep that badge that you saw?

Usually it was on the corner of his dashboard.

Driving around with it in front of his dashboard?

A lot of times, yeah.

This family is very, very powerful.

Were they not very influential in this community?

I mean, they had a very good name, they were known to help you with your problems.

How important was that family legacy to the defendant?

Very, seemed to be very important.

I think you've said it was more important to him than anybody else that you observed.

It seemed that way.

I mean, whenever there would be discussions of name changes or anything, you would be very involved in that, much more involved in that than he would be in other business matters.

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What's funny about that last part is that on Monday, Elick's brother John Marvin got snippy on the stand when prosecutor John Conrad asked him how important the family's name was to them.

Everyone down here knows the answer to that question.

At this point, the whole world knows the answer.

Here is how John Marvin answered it.

It's hard to tell from the audio when he answered, but he took the opportunity to speak directly to the jury as if putting himself on their same level.

One last thing, Mr. Murdoch, would you say that the Murdoch name and legacy is something that's important to you and your brothers?

Yes, I think any family's name and legacy is important to them.

Do I think my family's name is more important than yours or any of y'all's?

No, I don't.

But it's important to your brother as well, correct?

I think he would feel the exact same way as what I just said, that all families are important.

We'll be right back.

Okay, back to Mark Ball real quick.

One of the most important things he did was finally put the golf cart at the house that night.

How Maggie, Paul, and Ellick got to the kennels that night was not clear until Ellick took the stand.

Granted, Ellick didn't admit to driving Paul down there, but we fully believe because Mark Ball put the golf cart on the record, Ellick was compelled to incorporate it into what Creighton Waters repeatedly called Ellick's new story.

That is a big deal.

Not only because Dr. Kenny Kinsey had testified that Maggie appeared to have a bruise consistent with a tire from the family's golf cart, but because it could explain how the guns were so accessible to the shooter, how the shooter, if Ellick, could have gotten to the house so quickly and why Maggie's phone did not show footsteps at the same time as Ellick's.

It also adds to the shooter's ability to clean himself up quickly.

He could have sprayed himself off using the pressure hose at the kennels where the puddle of water was, and he could have quickly sprayed off the golf cart if there was any blood on it.

Finally, Mark Ball again, a witness for the defense, said what we were all thinking about September 4th, 2021.

Then on September 4th, what happened, what did you hear about?

I had spoken to Mr. Griffin just to let him know that we had terminated him.

He already knew, and about 11.30, 12.00, whatever time it was, I was on a tractor, and he called me and said, you're not going to believe what happened, and I thought my first response was, don't tell me that Jack ass killed himself, and he said, no, somebody shot him, and I just said, I don't believe that.

On Tuesday, the state brought Mark back as a rebuttal witness to refute some of the new

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claims that Ellick was making.

I cannot stress this enough, Ellick has told so many lies in this case that we can't even begin to outline even 10% of them here, and that's frustrating because there is a very real part of me that wants to make an index card for every lie he told during this investigation and every lie he told during this trial and clip them together in a lies across America fundraiser for victims of domestic violence.

Some of the lies Mark cleared up were related to the 300 blackout.

Ellick went from saying that he and Paul had ridden around the property looking for hogs, which, as we've learned many times over the past six weeks, Paul liked to have his blackout with him for that.

The one with the sight scope was used during the day, and Buster's blackout with the thermal scope was for the night.

But then Ellick changed that.

After admitting he was at the kennels last week, he now had to distance himself from Maggie's murder weapon.

Mark Ball also testified that Ellick never expressed a fear of sled.

Jim Griffin tried to get Mark to say that Paul's charges in the boat crash case and Ellick's determination to get Paul's name cleared were indication of Ellick not trusting sled.

Mark held firm.

You want to know why?

Because sled didn't charge Paul.

That was the state attorney general's office and the Department of Natural Resources.

Sled cleared Buster in the short investigation into whether he knew Paul had used his license that night.

So, big surprise.

No one can testify to Ellick being suspicious of sled, except Ellick.

In his new story, it did not surprise us one bit that Ellick took the stand on Thursday.

Sources have told us many times that Ellick Murdock likes attention.

We also heard several people testify that Ellick is good at reading people and making them feel confident in what he's saying.

This is how he was able to steal so much money over most of his career, through charming people into thinking he's the good guy, and that there are reasonable explanations for any red flags they're seeing.

That what they're seeing right there in front of them, what they're hearing, isn't real.

Only he has the real version of the truth.

When Ellick took that stand, by God, he did that same thing he's been doing his whole life.

He talked his way out of it.

Or at least he tried to talk his way out of it.

We'll see what the jury says.

We've seen a lot of people comment that Creighton Waters was bested by Ellick, or that he was too snarky or sarcastic with Ellick in his cross-examination.

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Creighton Waters went into uncharted territory, and he battled the most skilled liar that might have ever taken a stand in South Carolina.

And that says a lot.

It was almost a scene from a sci-fi movie.

That Creighton seemed disgusted by Ellick seems appropriate to us because Creighton fully believes Ellick killed Maggie and Paul.

And Creighton has probably seen some stuff over the past year when it comes to the attempts to derail the state's investigation.

In the end, we think Creighton was able to best Ellick.

Let's take a look at that testimony.

Right out of the gate, there was drama.

Here's Jim guiding his client through the big reveal.

On June 7th, 2021, did you take this gun or any gun like it and shoot your son Paul in the chest in the feed room at your property off Moselle Road?

No, I did not.

Mr. Murdy, did you take this gun or any gun like it and blow your son's brains out on June 7th or any day or any time?

No, I did not.

Mr. Murdy, did you take a 300 blackout such as this?

And fired into your wife Maggie's leg, torso, or any part of her body?

No, I did not.

Did you shoot a 300 blackout into her head causing her death?

Mr. Griffin, I didn't shoot my wife or my son any time, ever.

Mr. Murdy, is that you on the kennel video at 8.44 p.m. on June 7th, the night Maggie and Paul were murdered?

It is.

Were you, in fact, at the kennels at 8.44 p.m. on the night Maggie and Paul were murdered?

I was.

Did you lie to sled agent Owen and deputy Laura Rutland on the night of June 7th and told them that you stayed at the house after dinner?

I did lie to them.

Did you lie to agent Owen and agent Crawl from the follow-up interview on June 10th that the last time you saw Maggie and Paul was at dinner?

I did lie to them.

And in the interview of August 11th, did you tell agent Owen and agent Crawl, did you lie to them by telling them that you were not down at the kennels on that night?

Alec, why did you lie to agent Owen, agent Crawl from deputy Rutland by the last time you saw Maggie and Paul?

As my addiction evolved over time, I would get in these situations and circumstances where I would get paranoid thinking, and it could be anything that triggered it.

It might be a look somebody gave me, it might be a reaction somebody had to something I did, it might be a policeman following me in a car.

That night June 7th, after finding Maggie and Paul, don't talk to anybody without Danny

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with you.

All my partners were just repeatedly telling me that I had a deputy sheriff taking a gunshot test from my hands.

I'm sitting in a police car with David Owen asking me about my relationship with my wife and my son, and all those things coupled together after finding them, coupled with my distrust or sled caused me to have paranoid thoughts.

Normally when these paranoid thoughts would hit me, I could take a deep breath real quick and just think about it and reason my way through it and just get past it really quickly.

On June 7th, I wasn't thinking clearly, I don't think I was capable of reason, and I lied about being down there, and I'm so sorry that I did, I'm sorry to my son Buster, I'm sorry to Grandma and Papa T, I'm sorry to both of our families, and most of all, I'm sorry to Max and Paul Paul, I would never intentionally do anything to hurt either one of them, ever, ever.

Did you continue lying after that night, did you not?

Once I lied, I continued to lie, yes sir, or what a tangled web we weave, but once I told a lie, and I told my family, I had to keep a lie, Alex tell the jury what happened on the evening of June 7th, starting when you met with Paul.

I'd been at work that day, a fairly normal day.

What a tangled web we weave, there you have it.

At some point during the trial, Elick and his team decided to admit it was him on that kennel video, that he was at the kennel minutes before the murders, and to use the testimony and the evidence presented to the jury thus far to craft this new story about how he was there but missed the murders by minutes.

Now like we said earlier, there are too many lies to point out fully, but let's talk about that fairly normal day.

Elick knows that we know that he got the ultimatum from Jeannie seconder that day, here he seems to be playing down that confrontation as not a big deal.

Why?

Because if it's a big deal, then it is a big motive.

Now Elick's strategy is to say that he was lying, but isn't lying now and that Sled is lying except for the part where Sled says he's a liar, Elick says that part is true, but only that part.

In addition, he says Shelly Smith, his mother's caretaker, who told Sled Elick seemed to be trying to get her to say that he was at his mother's longer than he was that night and even offered to pay for her wedding and maybe get her a better job, is lying.

I don't distinctly remember having a conversation with her about how long I was over there, but I know that I told Shelly Smith that Sled was going to come and talk to her and that I'd appreciate it if she would talk to them and that she just needed to tell him the truth.

And did you take extra care not to talk to people that you knew Sled would be talking to?

Absolutely.

And why is that?

After this boatwreck that you've heard so much talk about in this courtroom, there were

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social media newspaper, I mean it went deeper than that, but I mean there was so much talk about how I fixed witnesses and structured the investigation, just things that were totally false, that were absolutely baseless, but it was said repeatedly, it was reported repeatedly how I'd done this and this witness and influence this police officer and all these things.

So I wasn't taking any chances.

Alec also says that his housekeeper Blanca, who did the family's laundry for years, was lying and that she told Sled that the clothes he had on in the Snapchat video shortly before the murders were different from the ones he wore to work that day and that she's never seen them and that she never has seen them since and that Alec seemed to try to get her to recast her memory about what he'd been wearing that day.

Did you have a follow up, did you have a conversation after that meeting with Sled with Blanca about what you were wearing that day?

Absolutely.

And what was the purpose of the conversation with Blanca?

Well, they made an issue about that in that meeting and I asked Blanca about those clothes that I had on earlier that day.

You asked her specifically about the blue shirt?

I asked her specifically about all the clothes.

What I asked Blanca about specifically was, did she remember getting my clothes after she came back, when she came back to Moselle, did she remember getting my clothes, specifically what I asked her?

And why were you asking her those questions?

Because on August the 11th, they had made an issue about me wearing, still wearing those clothes, not having changed clothes when I was in that Snapchat video.

So that's why I went to Blanca.

Did they ever ask you on August the 11th whether I'm asking for those clothes?

Can you produce the clothes?

Did they ask you that?

No, they didn't.

Have they ever asked you for those clothes?

No.

As far as my understanding goes, my clothes were never an issue in this case.

Also, according to Ellick, the non-lying liar, PMPED's chief financial officer, Jeannie Sackinger, was lying when she characterized their conversation about the missing \$792,000 as a confrontation and when she testified that that confrontation had stopped because he told her that he had just gotten information that his father had taken a turn for the worst. As we all saw from Sled's timeline from that day, Ellick did get a text about his father's health right around the time of this non-confrontation confrontation, but that text said his father's prognosis had improved.

I can't remember exactly what I told her.

The conversation got interrupted very quickly, but I told Jeannie that the funds were in Chris Wilson's account and nothing to worry about.

I didn't know where the mix-up came from.

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What was your level of concern about Ms. Sackinger's inquiry to you on June the 7th?
There was some level of concern because she's asking me about money that I took that I wasn't supposed to have.

Certainly, I had some level of concern, but it wasn't a very big concern.

As you heard testimony earlier, at some point Annette Griswold had sent Chris Wilson an email something to the effect of Ellick thinks he has more expenses or something like that seeking financial documents from Chris Wilson.

I wasn't copied on that, but when Chris Wilson got that, Chris Wilson called me up and he's like, you know, what is this all about?

I said objection rules 8.01 and 8.02.

Your Honor, I'm not asking for what Chris Wilson said, I'll move on, I accepted objection.

Were you concerned about Chris Wilson opening his trust account records to your law firm?

No, I was not concerned about that at all.

Why were you not concerned?

I knew that one of the people that Chris Wilson, as you heard Chris Wilson and I were very close, we talked every day.

I did work with him all the time.

He was one of the people closest to me in the whole world.

I knew everything about him and I knew he was going through one of his partners and he and his partner had split up.

A partner and an associate had moved to a firm in Charleston.

The partner was going through a divorce and the wife of the partner was trying to get Chris Wilson's trust documents in that case to find out money, her husband didn't have anything to do with Chris and I or anything, it totally had to do with that, but I knew that Chris Wilson was not going to send any financial documents to my law firm at least at that time and at least not any time soon, so while I'm sure it registered with me that I got a deal with this at that particular time, it wasn't anything that was a big deal.

Was there an immediate urgency to the situation on June the 7th?

No.

And I believe there's a second year testified about your conversation with her, you learned that your dad was going back in the hospital.

That's correct, that was a text.

I can't remember if that text came from my brother Randy or my brother John, but they were the ones that were taking my dad back to the hospital that day and whichever one was with him, believe it or not, John was with him at the hospital, but I know Randy was with him at some treatment, they send those documents.

Bottom line is we got a text saying, we knew my dad was really sick, he had cancer and he couldn't breathe and there was a big issue about whether his inability to breathe was coming from an obstruction caused by the cancer, which was the worst case scenario and that's what it ended up being ultimately and that's what he died from.

But this particular text was saying, okay, we're putting him back in the hospital, the doctor thinks it's pneumonia, which was, I mean pneumonia is never a good thing, but when compared to cancer, at that time pneumonia, that was a good thing to learn that.

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So like we said, it was a better prognosis, but instead of telling Jeannie second or that, Ellic appears to have used this text as a way to effectively end the conversation with Jeannie and you guessed it, allow her to give him sympathy over the news.

Also interesting here is that Maggie's sister Marion testified that Maggie had told her that Ellic was always the go-to person for Randolph and Libby, that he was the sibling who always was being called to care for them.

But it seems like Randy, John Marvin, Lynn and Maggie were the engaged ones when it came to Randolph's health that day.

Ellic responded to the text thread once and it was an accident.

Maggie didn't respond to the text thread but appeared to have made several calls to Libby's housekeeper that day and even arranged to bring dinner to Almeida on Wednesday evening. So that seems to be another lie because it's a lie upon a lie upon a lie for Ellic.

Another thing with Ellic is the manipulation.

All throughout his testimony, he referred to Maggie and Paul and just about everyone by an endearing and almost annoying, depending on how you look at it, nickname.

In the cross examination of Ellic, Creighton made it sure to point that out that Ellic never referred to Paul or Maggie by those nicknames during any interaction with Sled or any investigators until then in that moment in front of the jury.

Ellic also seems incapable of fully mimicking the emotion of love.

Here he is describing Maggie as Maggs and Paul as Paul Paul.

You know she was such a lady, such a feminine person, a girl, but then she had two boys and she didn't grow up in the swamp and in the country riding four-wheelers and hunting and fishing.

She changed everything.

She became a boy's mom.

Her life became ball in riding four-wheelers and doing those things.

Now, don't get me wrong, she was still a 100% girl and you heard Mary say she'd love to do those things with her nieces, but she threw herself into her boy's life.

She never took not working for granted.

She might not have worked, but I promise you she worked and she worked to make sure me and Paul and Buster had everything.

She wanted a big family and pregnancy just didn't suit her.

Her pregnancies were so hard, I would leave her in the mornings and she'd be sick.

I'd come home and check on her and she'd be sick.

I'd come back at the end of the day and she'd be sick.

I mean, she was so sick all the time with both of boys and when we had Paul Paul, Maggie got in trouble and Paul Paul got in trouble and just pregnancy didn't suit her.

So we decided that we would just have the two boys and I just think how hard it was on her.

Just made her love those boys so much more and she did, but she was the kind of person who, Maggie, she could put on the most elegant ball gown and go to the governor's mansion and hang out with the most affluent people, whatever, or she could come down to, she could go to a food bank in Hampton or Walterburg and fit in.

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Everybody at both places would say when she left, and that Maggie, she's a good one. She's just a special person.

Paul Paul was just the brightest, he was the brightest, he's the most inquisitive young man, he wanted to be a part of everything.

If you were working, I can remember as a little boy, you'd be working on something, it didn't matter what it was, his little head was going to come in there, nose in there to see what you were doing.

He was a man's man, he was a 100% country boy, he was tough, he could hunt anything, he could catch any fish, he could run any piece of equipment, he could use any tool, I mean he could do anything.

At 22 years old, he could do so many things, I mean he took care of so many and he was so tough, but on the other hand, he had a side to him that was just so sweet.

He wouldn't come home, he wouldn't go check on his grandparents, he wouldn't go near some of them where he wouldn't go out of his way, check on his grandparents, you know to be such a tough person, he would get all of his buddies and get on a boat and go watch a sunset.

I mean 22 year old people, you know this stuff like that, he was such a special boy, he cared about people, he was fiercely loyal, he was so misrepresented in the media, I mean never an accurate story told about what he was, and I would challenge you right now, I would challenge everybody in this room to go find somebody, somebody that knew Paw Paw and really knew him that did not have an ulterior motive that would say something negative about him, and I challenge everybody who can hear me now to do that, I mean Paul was that kind of person, if you knew him, he would help you and he would be glad to help you, you know I thought Mark Ball made a good point when he said, you know Paw Paw might not have quite found his place yet, Paul was ADD, ADHD and so he would jump around from thing to thing a lot, but there's absolutely no question in my mind whatsoever that Paw Paw would have found whatever that thing was that he was going to do, and whatever that ended up being, he was going to be one of the best at it that you've ever known.

Alex's use of the phrase ulterior motive in describing anyone who would criticize Paul is the problem here.

Paul had mental health issues, he was an outcast in his family and he clearly had problems that he needed to get help for, the boat crash should have been a huge wake up call for the Murdoch family, that Paul had problems that he needed to fix, but they ignored the fact that Paul's problems led to Mallory Beach's death and instead continued to try to cover for him.

I honestly wonder if there was ever a moment when Paul wanted to confess to being the driver and his parents wouldn't have allowed him.

Alec gaslighting anyone who was said that Paul had a bad side to him, that is how we got here.

Do you love Paul?

Did I love him?

Like no other.

He am Buster.

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Do you love Maggie?

I'm more than anything.

I love Maggie.

When the first time we went out, did you kill Maggie?

No, I did not kill Maggie, I did not kill Paul.

I would never hurt Maggie and I would never hurt Paul ever under any circumstances.

A lot of people have pointed out that Alec repeatedly answered questions like this using the word hurt and it is interesting that this would be his word of choice.

A long time friend of Maggie, a friend of more than 30 years who knew Maggie and Alec and their relationship pointed out something interesting.

This person said that they believed from the start that Alec was responsible for Maggie's and Paul's murders and that Alec had decided to kill Maggie and Paul in the same way a person decides to kill themselves.

His friend noted that Alec can convince himself that even though he's doing something bad such as stealing money, that he's not actually hurting anyone by doing so.

Basically that he can rationalize these things to the point where they become something different in his mind.

This friend believes that Alec did the same thing with Maggie and Paul, that he had decided to do it, had made peace with that decision and was able to carry it through because he had rationalized it.

This is why there is that cognitive dissonance between what people hear on that video at 8.44pm that night and what they know happened minutes later.

The murders prevented Paul from having to take a plea deal or go through a trial or end up in prison.

His death would mean that the state would drop charges and his name.

The Murdoch name would be cleared.

Their deaths meant Alec would likely be dropped from the boat crash case or at the very least that a Hampton County jury would go easy on him.

They meant that he would be inheriting Maggie's more than 5 million dollar estate and that meant he would have the money to pay back PMPD fully and they'd be none the wiser.

There were so many perverse upsides for him and had he not pushed at the limits of what his law firm would tolerate from him, he might have gotten away with it.

So why does Alec keep saying he would never hurt Maggie and Paul?

If he did this, maybe he didn't see their murders as hurting them so much as he saw it as an act of mercy.

Remember when Maggie's sister said she asked Alec whether Maggie and Paul had suffered?

His answer to that was no.

So after Jim gave Alec the opportunity to recast his entire story of what he had done that day and night, Crayton Waters began pulling it apart while the glue was still wet.

Mr. Murdoch, let's start with a few things I think we can agree on.

You agree that the most important part of your testimony here today is explaining your life for a year and a half that you were never down at those kennels at 844.

Would you agree with that?

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I think all of my testimony is important, Mr. Waters.

Would you agree that that's an important part of your testimony?

Sure.

All right.

And would you also agree that the first time that law enforcement officers that you've talked to and the prosecution and here in open court ever heard you say that you lied about being in the kennels was today in this court?

Yes, I'm aware of that.

You would agree with that?

Yes, sir.

All this time later, this is the first time you've ever said that?

Yes, sir.

And you would agree with me that for years, you were stealing money from clients?

Yes, sir, I agree with that.

And that you were stealing from your law firm?

Yes, sir, I agree with that.

And that had been going on since at least 2010?

I'm not sure of the exact date, but it's been going on a long time.

I agree with that.

What's your best guess of the day?

I'm not sure.

You don't know?

I don't take a dispute with 2010.

I just don't know that for sure.

All right.

I'm sure about a lot of things, but you don't know that, is that correct?

I'm fine with that date, Mr. Waters.

I don't have any reason to dispute it.

I'm just not certain of it.

All right.

Let's just keep on things that we may be able to agree about.

And let's talk first about your family's legacy here in the legal profession, okay?

My family's been a central part of the legal community.

Yes, sir.

I agree with that.

And not only just the central part of the legal community, but the chief prosecutor for this area since 1910, I think, up until 2006?

1920.

1920.

2006, 1910 is when my great-grandfather started the law firm.

The law firm.

That's right.

All right.

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So 1920 to 2006, correct?

That's correct.

An unbroken chain of being the chief prosecutor here, correct?

That's correct.

And as part of that, of your practice, you were a trial lawyer, correct?

That's correct.

You were a successful trial lawyer.

I don't know about your adjective, but I was, you know, I guess so, yes, sir.

Do you make millions of dollars in legal fees?

Yes, sir.

But you won't tell this jury that's successful?

Well, if that's the criteria, yes, sir, I was successful.

This is how ELIC answered questions for a day and a half.

Do you think people viewed you as a successful lawyer?

I'm sure there were a lot of people that did.

Do you think people viewed your family as very prominent?

I believe that there were a lot of people that did, yes, sir.

And did you think that a lot of people viewed you and your family as very prominent in the legal community here?

I never thought of myself as prominent.

Asked you if you thought people viewed you that way.

Let me ask you that.

At the time, did I think people viewed you that way?

Yeah, prior to everything happening.

No, I don't think that I thought people viewed me as prominent.

No, sir.

I mean, like a big shot?

No, sir.

I don't think that.

What about your family?

Did my family thought we were big shots?

No, sir.

I definitely don't think that.

Your family is prominent in this community.

Prominent?

Yes.

As in?

It's not a hard question.

Well, I'm just not sure, you know, I think my family was very well thought of.

I think my family was respected.

I think my family helped a lot of people.

I'm not challenging you on any of that.

I'm just getting you to agree.

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What seems to be a basic fact, would you agree with that?

With what?

Did my family helped a lot of people and was well thought of?

Prominent.

If that's what you mean by that, yes, sir.

And that your family had a very long association with law enforcement?

Yes, sir.

And you had a long association with law enforcement?

Yes.

Yes.

Okay.

By association, I assume you're talking about friendships.

Yeah.

But not only just friendships, but also professionals as well, correct?

As a prosecutor?

Professional associations with law enforcement.

As a prosecutor or as a civil attorney?

Okay.

Let's talk about civil.

Did you have associations with them in civil cases?

Sure.

I mean, as we discussed, a lot of cases that I handled were rec cases or might be a trained rec or track trail, but there were a lot of highway patrolmen involved.

There were a lot of local law enforcement involved.

So yeah, we dealt with a lot of law enforcement in the civil practice.

And then you also mentioned that you were a prosecutor as well, correct?

I was a volunteer assistant solicitor.

Did you or your family or your law firm ever have events or parties or social affairs in which the law enforcement community in this area was invited?

Now people in these parts say that the Murdochs are the law here.

Here's why.

I believe that I became an assistant solicitor when I moved from Buford to Hampton.

So that would have been September, sometime around September, 1998 might have been a little bit after that, but sometime.

Did you get a badge when you came an assistant solicitor?

At some point I did.

Yes, sir.

And who gave you that badge?

My father.

Mr. Randolph.

Yes, sir.

And over the years, did you prosecute criminal cases, much as what's going on here today?

Yes, sir.

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At times I did.

And?

I believe that I prosecuted from 1998 to 2001.

I believe that.

2001?

Keep going.

I'm sorry.

I mean, 2021.

I'm sorry.

Until 2021, for 1998, 2021, I believe I was involved in five juries.

I believe there were five trials.

Five trials?

There's the best that I can remember.

All with my dad.

That was really the purpose of me being an assistant solicitor was getting to spend time with him, do things with him.

Sure.

Five jury trials over all that time, but you had a badge that entire time, is that correct?

I had a badge for a big part of that time, yes, sir.

You actually had two badges, right?

I had one badge, but when my granddad became an assistant solicitor for my dad, when my dad became the solicitor, he had an assistant solicitor's badge.

When he passed away, I had his badge, and that was one of them.

At some point in time, you were asking somebody about two badges, and that was the other badge.

I got you.

You said you did five criminal jury trials as a prosecutor, correct?

Assisted in those or was doing them, yes, sir.

I believe I was actually the lead lawyer in one of them, I helped my dad in the other four.

Why would you do that?

Why would you have them in the cup holder?

You're not saying you were on official business, are you?

No.

I'm not saying I'm on official business.

Why would you want them in a cup holder if you got pulled over?

Because I found that law enforcement, oftentimes, is friendlier when you're in law enforcement.

When you're law enforcement.

So you considered yourself law enforcement?

No, sir.

I can't say that I considered myself law enforcement.

You carried a badge on you as an assistant solicitor for two decades ruffling?

He didn't take an oath.

Let me be clear about what that means.

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Elec Murdoch did not swear to uphold the law.

And yet he was given law enforcement credentials by Duffy Stone, the man who was elected by the people of the 14th Circuit to prosecute cases here.

Not only that, Elec got himself some blue lights so that he could actually, we're not really sure what he did with those blue lights, but we know that South Carolina law dictates who can and cannot have blue lights because it's, you know, kind of a big deal.

When did you have lights like blue lights and stuff?

Yes, sir.

I had some blue lights.

When did you have blue lights?

And let me remember, you did five cases over 20 years and you had blue lights in your vehicle, but it was your private vehicle, correct?

Well, it was the vehicle that I drove.

It was a law firm owned vehicle.

The law firm's own vehicle.

So how'd you get blue lights in there?

I had them installed.

And who installed them?

I believe that Eddie Gibson installed them.

And who was that?

He's the guy who apparently does blue light work for most of the sheriff's departments in the 14th Circuit and a lot of the police departments.

And did you, when did you have that installed, you recall?

One vehicle or more than one day, we'll start with that.

I believe I had blue lights in one vehicle.

And when did you have that installed, Ethan?

I'm not sure.

It would have been five years, 10 years.

No, here, here, I can give you a time frame.

The vehicle that I was in on, that got taken in on June the 7th, I got that vehicle sometime around late December or January, so I'd had it for six months.

I would have had the previous vehicle for five years, that's how long we kept vehicles in the law firm.

So I would have had it for five years.

And sometime during that five-year period, I had lights installed.

Did you ask the sheriff at the time if you could do that?

I did.

Who was that?

I believe it was T.C. Smalls, and I believe in Colleton it was Andy Strickland, and I believe in Allendale it was Tom Carter.

Sheriff T.C. Smalls, the recently retired longtime sheriff of Hampton County.

You mean the same Sheriff T.C. Smalls who testified Tuesday that he never gave ELIC permission to have those blue lights?

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Yes, another lie.

Brighton also asked ELIC about his drug use while we think ELIC had a drug problem of some sort, or we acknowledge that it at least seems that way.

This next part had us questioning whether that was real, because ELIC has no credibility. At the very least, we know he told his family that he had a problem whenever they'd find bags of pills, but was he actually taking those pills?

Here's why we ask that.

It depends on the strength of the pills that you just mentioned.

If I had 30 milligram pills, you figure 100 pills would be 3,000 milligrams, 100.

So from what we understand, those are not normal doses, even for people who struggle with addiction.

Several doctors on Twitter commented and said that it is not compatible with life.

Now, if you had any questions about ELIC's privilege, or any questions about whether he was actually paranoid about sled, get a load of the next part.

Actually a matter of seconds, I mean, it was something, again, my whole life, you wouldn't see me where I didn't have pills on me, and that's where I kept them.

I kept them on me because I was scared to put them somewhere for fear somebody would find them.

So I kept them on me.

So if you saw me, I had pills on me.

I had a pocket full of pills on June 8, when I was sitting in David Owen's patrol car.

So I always had them on me, and I might be going to Edistone, and I turn on Hampton Street right out here, and a police car pulls out, boom, I have paranoid thoughts, but I could always say, you're not doing anything wrong, he's not following you, and I can get past it in a matter of seconds.

At this time, that wasn't the only time that Paul found pills or Maggie found pills, was that correct?

Now there were a number of times where Mags found pills, Paul Paul found pills, Buss found pills, I mean it was ongoing, it was just an ongoing battle for me.

I promised Paul that as soon as we finished with his criminal case that I would go to rehab, and so he was holding Paul's criminal case over Paul's head when Paul expressed a desire for his dad to seek help, telling.

Another thing the court learned was that on the night of the boat crash, Elik had the badge that Duffy Stone gave him on display, as if he were some off duty cop.

He tucked the back in his pocket and had the gold star part of it hanging out.

That was February 2019.

Did no one tell Duffy Stone about this breach?

Why was Elik allowed to keep that badge for another two and a half years?

Did I hang it out in my pocket when I wanted an advantage?

Yes.

I may have, I certainly may have, was I aware that y'all have started an investigation into what I did in the hospital prior to the June of 7th?

Yes.

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I had to be correct.

And if it wasn't before that, it was shortly after it.

One of the best parts of Creighton's cross-examination of Elik came when Creighton said the thing we were all thinking about Elik's sudden use of endearing nicknames as soon as he hit the stand, I mean, I called him Paw-Paw, Maggie called him Paw-Paw, Bus calls him Paw-Paw, Rowe-Rowe calls him Paw-Paw, who was Rowe-Rowe?

That's Rogan Gibson.

And this jury, of course, has heard multiple recorded statements of you during the course of this.

Did you ever refer to Paul as Paw-Paw during that?

I don't know.

You know, do you recall?

How I referred to, I can say Paul if you prefer that.

No, you can probably whatever you want.

I'm just asking you if you ever called him that during the course of that entire investigation.

Or is that also the first time today, at least publicly?

Is today the first time I've called my son Paw-Paw, Paw-Paw?

No sir, that is not correct.

It might not be correct, but we all know what he was doing there.

Creighton got criticized online for his approach with Elik, and yes, there were times when it seemed like Elik was the one asking the questions, so to speak.

But say what you want, Creighton finished strong.

First, he showed the jury that Elik was capable of lying to them in a very convincing way.

These were real people you were dealing with, right?

Absolutely.

I know you want to give that answer, but these were real people, aren't they?

Nah, they're very real people.

And one of the saddest parts of this whole thing is, you know, they're people that I still care about, and I did them this way.

I'm asking you if you remember one time where you're sitting there in your heart, looking somebody in the eye, knowing you're stealing from them, and you remember it.

I remember stealing from people, I remember lying to people, and I remember misleading people.

For me to tell you that I sat down with each one of these people.

I'm asking you to tell me about just one conversation, one time where you recall looking somebody in the eye and convincing them with your lies that nothing was amiss.

One conversation.

There were plenty of conversations where I looked people in the eye and I lied to them.

There were plenty of times where I took money that I shouldn't have taken.

We'll be right back.

There were a lot of stunning takeaways from this trial, but during the course of Elik's testimony, he told the jury several shocking sentences that can really stick in your head and make you think.

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Phrases like, I did what I didn't want to do, and I got out of there real quick, and I would never intentionally do anything to hurt either one of them.

And once I lied, I continued to lie.

Those phrases are powerful and have me questioning, was the master manipulator telling on himself. And also, what he didn't say matters too.

Not once did we hear Elik express any remorse for leaving Maggie and Paul at the kennels, for not checking on them on the way to Almeida.

Remorse is another emotion that is hard for Elik Murdof to remember to fake, on top of fear.

But Creighton also outlined the absurdity of Elik's new story.

All right.

Well, let me ask you a question then.

So what you're telling this jury is that it's a random vigilante, the 12-year-old five-two people that just happened to know that Paul and Maggie were both at Moselle on June 7th, that knew that they would be at the kennels alone on June 7th, that knew that she would not be there, but only between the times of 849 and 902, that they show up without a weapon, assuming that they're going to find weapons and ammunition there, that they commit this crime during that short time window, and then they travel the same exact route that you do around the same time to Almeida.

That's what you're trying to tell this jury?

And Creighton had a mic drop moment after he led the jury down the long path of Elik's lies.

And after he played clips from Elik's three interviews with Sled and asked him repeatedly, when did you decide to lie about your alibi, and after Elik identified that moment as being early on the morning of June 8th, when Agent David Owen asked him about his relationships with Maggie and Paul.

After Creighton allowed Elik to sit on that stand for hours and tell the jury that he lied because he became paranoid after having his hands tested for gunshot residue, and after he said Colletín County Sheriff Buddy Hill and Yemisee Police Chief Greg Alexander and all the PMPED lawyers told him to be careful talking to Sled, Creighton did this.

But it was the dope paranoia, it was the fact that the deputy took your GSR, it was the fact that your law partners and Greg Alexander and the sheriff were telling you you needed to have a lawyer before he talked to police, it was the factor that you got in the car with Dave Owen and thought he was somebody else from some case 10 years ago, correct? Yes, that, believe in David Owens, was the person involved in the case that I talked about was one of the factors that caused me to distrust Sled.

Right, and then also you said that they started asking you about in that first interview about your relationship with Maggie and Paul, and that's one thing you mentioned as well, correct? And that was certainly something that contributed to me having paranoid thinking.

Playing the Daniel Green body cam video in 2026.

Okay, yeah, the police are here now, the police are here now, that's not wrong, okay.

When was the last time you were here with them, or talked to them or anything like that?

It was earlier tonight, I don't know the exact time, but I left, I was probably gone an hour

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and a half from my mom's and I saw them about 45 minutes before that.

And at that point in time, Sled was not there.

No one had gotten GSR from you, your law partners or Sheriff Hill were not there.

No one had asked you about your relationships, David Owen was not there, but you still told the same lie, and all those reasons that you just gave this jury about the most important part of your testimony was a lie too.

Isn't that true, Mr. Murdoch?

I disagree with that.

Nothing further.

On Wednesday, the jury was taken to Moselle to see the spots where Maggie and Paul were murdered, and to see where the state says that Elick cleaned himself up and sped back to the house.

It is possible that the next time we speak with you, that we have a verdict.

No matter how this turns out, the fact that it got this far is actually really encouraging.

It's something, frankly, we weren't sure that we'd ever see, law enforcement having the gumption to take on a Murdoch.

And we've seen from the beginning, the Murdoch legacy was not going to be able to withstand the test of technology.

People might be scared to tell the truth, but technology is not.

And that is what this trial comes down to.

The data.

GPS.

iPhones.

Texts.

And phone calls.

And that one video.

Weird, that Elick didn't see this coming, given that enthusiastic testimonial that Twitter found this week, the 2011 video that surfaced this week depicts Elick singing the praises of how video evidence helped him get a bigger settlement for Hakeem Pinkney, part of which Elick later stole.

Yes, we found out this week that Elick was exploiting Hakeem by featuring him in a promo video while stealing his money.

The best storyteller in the world cannot relay with full effect the way a video can.

And I'm sold on it.

We agree, Elick.

We agree.

So on Wednesday, Creighton Waters gave his closing arguments, and it was the finale everyone has been waiting for.

Creighton gave us the biggest of big Creighton energy, but in the calmest of ways, he carefully held up every puzzle piece.

He showed each piece to the jury, and he showed how each piece perfectly fit into the puzzle that has been his life's work for the past year and a half.

Over and over, he tied up loose ends.

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He explained the significance of how each fact snapped perfectly into the one next to it.

He gave context, he pointed out the lies, he pointed out the defense's weak spots, and he pointed out every time Elick had told on himself.

Through it all, he took care to remind the jury that Elick Murdock was a prosecutor, that he was a lawyer, he was a man who knew exactly what he needed to do to craft his alibi and to create confusion, and he reminded the jury exactly why they were there. Maggie Murdock and her son Paul Murdock.

He was lying to you, ladies and gentlemen, when he made those up.

He was lying to you when he made those up, just like he's lied to everyone close to him, and he's good at it.

He's good at it.

It was earlier tonight, I don't know the exact time, but I left, I was probably gone an hour and a half from my mom's, and I saw them about 45 minutes before that, I wrote around with Paul.

The names, the opportunity, and ample evidence of guilty conduct and guilty conscience. All four factors are present, and Maggie and Paul deserve a voice.

They need a voice because they can no longer speak.

This has been a tough job, but the system depends on people who take that oath as jurors and are willing to honor that oath and make that tough decision to vindicate these victims, to vindicate Maggie and Paul who were cut down in the prime of their lives.

This is a sealed exhibit.

This is what he did.

This is what he did right here.

This defendant on the other hand has fooled everyone, everyone, everyone who thought they were close to him, everyone who thought they knew he was who he was.

He's fooled them all, and he fooled Maggie and Paul too, and they paid for it with their lives.

Don't let him fool you too.

On behalf of the state of South Carolina, I ask you to return a verdict of guilty against the defendant Richard Alexander Murdock for the murder of his wife Maggie and his son Paul and for his possession of firearms during the commission of those malicious offenses. Thank y'all for your attention during this long trial.

And that goes for y'all.

Thank you for paying attention this long, for sticking with us on this very long journey, for reminding us that there are good people out there who believe in our mission.

The jury verdict will not change the hope that we have for the system to change.

And that is because of you.

Stay tuned and stay in the sunlight.

The Murdock Murders podcast is created and hosted by me, Manny Matney, produced by my husband, David Moses, and Liz Farrell is our executive editor.

From Luna Shark Productions.